

## How Do I Get My Amateur Radio License??

Amateur radio (ham) has repeatedly proven the one reliable way to communicate when all others fail. Using amateur radio frequencies requires a license from the FCC. The Technician class license is the easiest to earn and what is needed for local communication. The following are several well-proven ways to study and take the qualifying test. The referenced groups and web sites are listed at the bottom. The American Amateur Radio League (ARRL)<sup>1</sup> site has general information about amateur radio.

The large majority of new hams get their license without paying for, or attending, a formal course. They study the material, ask questions of friends, take sample tests and then go get their license. Some prefer to attend a class.

### Formal Courses

There are several types of courses offered. The ARRL offers (for a fee) home study courses. Local courses (generally free) can be one day, or a night and a day, or a multi-week evening format. The ARRL wedothat-radio web site<sup>2</sup> lists local courses. Or ask your favorite active ham.

### Study Materials

The ARRL Ham Radio License Manual (the RED book) is available from ARRL or at the Ham Radio Outlet (HRO)<sup>3</sup> in Tigard. This book comprehensively covers the 10 areas of study and includes the multiple-choice questions that are on the FCC test. The material is thorough, but avoids unnecessary higher math.

The hamelmer web site<sup>4</sup> offers study material and questions for all classes of license. The Elmer approach instructs specifically on correct answers for the test with enough context to make sense. It's not as thorough, but is sufficient to pass the test and serve well as a ham. The manuals are a BIG (6 MB) download, so be prepared.

### The Test

The test is multiple-choice with questions selected from an approved and public pool of questions. The goal is to know which answer makes the most sense. The QRZ site<sup>5</sup> offers free on-line sample tests that are automatically scored. Take a few of the tests to get prepared and confident.

The tests are regularly administered locally by volunteer hams for a \$15 fee. The ARRL wedothat-radio web site<sup>2</sup> maintains a test date and site list.

### I Got the License, What's Next?

Get involved. Join the TVARC club<sup>6</sup>, learn about the local Amateur Radio Emergency Service (ARES)<sup>7</sup>. Ask other hams what equipment to consider. Check with HRO<sup>3</sup> for new equipment and the web for good used equipment. Talk with family, friends, community about how to take advantage of your new communication capability that works when everything else fails.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.arrl.org/> ARRL – The national radio club that has fantastic on-line information

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.wedothat-radio.org/> ARRL-sponsored site with info on courses, material and test sites

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.hamradio.com/> Ham Radio Outlet (HRO)– New ham gear and great advice. Local Store:  
11705 SW Pacific Hwy [99W] Suite Z, Portland OR 97223 800-854-6046 503-598-0555

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.hamelmer.com/Tech/Technician.html> Study materials for the Technician class license

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.qrz.com/p/testing.pl> Site for on-line practice tests

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.otvarc.org/> Tualatin Valley Amateur Radio Club - the largest and very active local club

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.washcoares.org/> Washington County ARES – the formal ham emergency response group